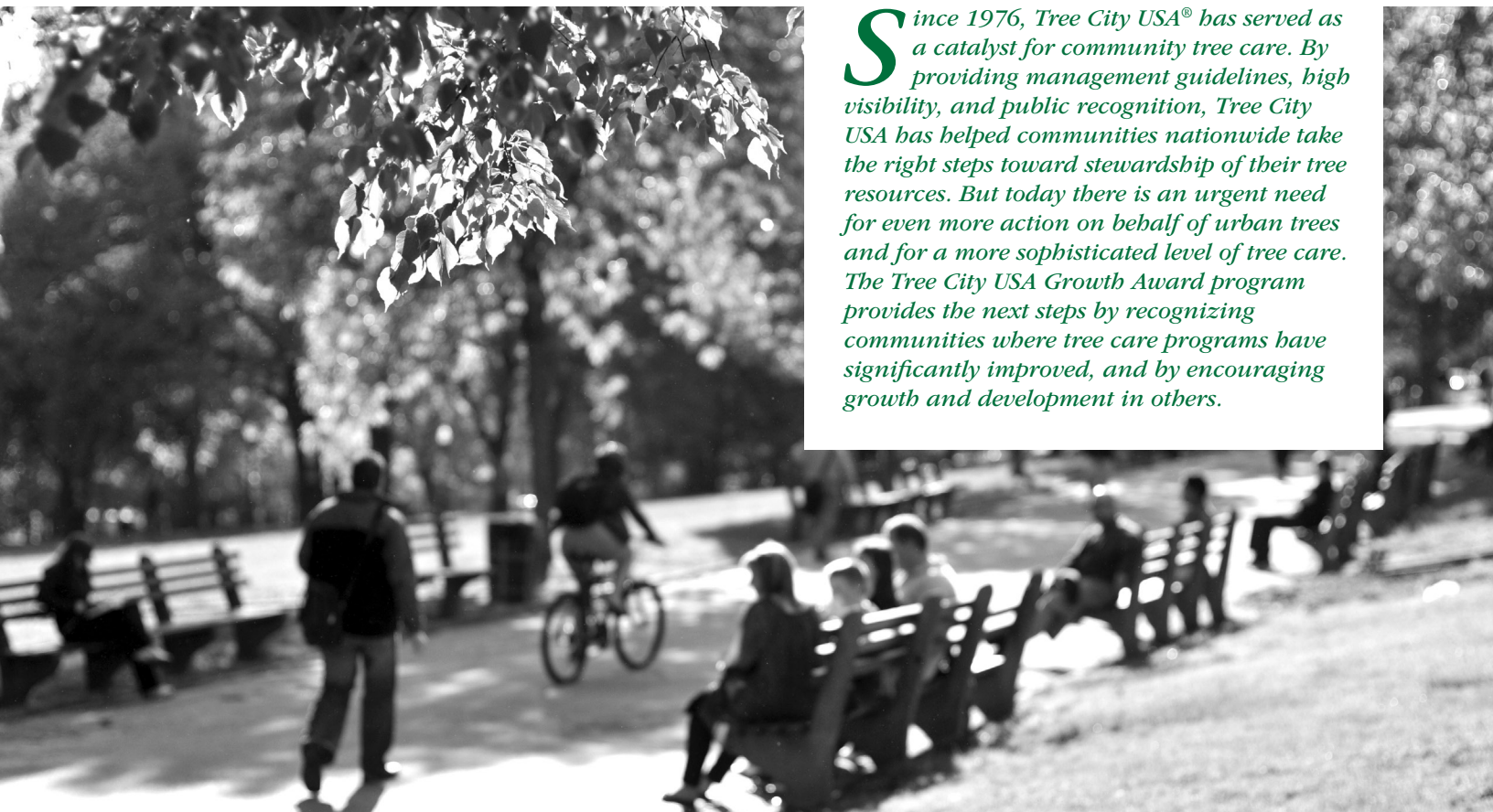




Tree City USA Growth Award

**TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**

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Since 1976, Tree City USA® has served as a catalyst for community tree care. By providing management guidelines, high visibility, and public recognition, Tree City USA has helped communities nationwide take the right steps toward stewardship of their tree resources. But today there is an urgent need for even more action on behalf of urban trees and for a more sophisticated level of tree care. The Tree City USA Growth Award program provides the next steps by recognizing communities where tree care programs have significantly improved, and by encouraging growth and development in others.

“Effective tree care is an ongoing process of growth and renewal — a program of planting and care that continues through the years. Tree City USA provides a solid foundation for that process. But community leaders realize there is also a need today to do more and to do it better.” So said John Rosenow, former chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation, when he announced the new Tree City USA Growth Award in 1991.

The Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the U.S. Forest Service, created the award program to recognize environmental improvement and higher levels of tree care throughout America. Importantly, the award is designed to do more than recognize achievement beyond the four basic standards of Tree City USA. It is also intended to communicate new ideas by showing community leaders what can and should be done in a well-rounded community forestry program. In short, the criteria for receiving a Tree City USA Growth Award

The purpose behind Tree City USA Growth Awards is to encourage greater effort on behalf of community forestry.

provide an excellent checklist for planning the future of any community’s forestry program.

You are invited to join other Friends of Tree City USA in developing the kind of expanded community forestry program that will make your town or city a winner. In fact, because the competition is only against your community’s own previous record, there is no reason why a Growth Award should not become an annual goal for your forestry department or tree board. Municipalities, counties, and military bases that have received the Growth Award 10 different years have the added distinction of being named a “Sterling Community.”

Award-winning communities receive attractive Growth Award banners to add to their Tree City USA signs.



Arbor Day Foundation®
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

The Roots of Tree City USA

Tree City USA was created in 1976 as a joint U.S. bicentennial project of the Arbor Day Foundation, U.S. Forest Service, and the National Association of State Foresters. The partnership was soon joined and strengthened by the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The Tree City USA program helped expand the entire concept of Arbor Day from tree planting to total tree care. It also expanded the mission of the Arbor Day Foundation, which had been created during the centennial of Arbor Day in 1972 to breathe new life into the tree planting holiday and bring its meaning more in line with the environmental needs of today's society.

Shortly after Tree City USA was created, forestry experts Gene Grey and Fred Deneke published the first edition of their book, *Urban Forestry*. In describing the Tree City USA program, the authors wrote, "Its impact as an incentive for development of local city forestry programs is yet to be determined." By 1986, when the second edition appeared, the authors were able to report, "Its impact ... has been significant."

And so it has. The program has become the symbol of good community forestry nationwide. From 42 communities that joined during the first year, the network of members has now expanded to more than 3,400.

With the added benefits of the Growth Award, it is hoped that more communities of all sizes will join the network and that all will, indeed, continually improve their programs on behalf of trees.

BENEFITS OF RECEIVING A



- An improved and expanded tree care program
- An opportunity to increase citizen awareness about the need to plant and care for trees
- Recognition for local elected officials
- Staff and volunteer recognition and appreciation
- Community pride
- Community image conducive to attracting progressive businesses and new residents
- Increased support for your community forestry program



Requirements for the Growth Award

Current requirements and application submission dates can be found at the website noted on page 8. The following will provide an idea of the kinds of activities eligible for a minimum of 10 points needed to be designated as a Tree City USA Growth Award community. Points may be earned in any one of the four categories, or spread across more than one. Activities must be completed in the year preceding the application date.

CATEGORY A: *Education and Public Relations*

A goal of the Growth Award Program is to expand the capacity of a community to skillfully manage and protect its tree resources. The following activities include ways to increase public understanding, gain wider recognition, and ensure the continuing education of staff, tree board members, arborists, and others who work with trees.

A1. PUBLICATIONS (2 POINTS)

Materials for the public about tree planting and care, such as a listing of recommended street trees, were first published or significantly improved.

A2. LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION (2 POINTS)

A new method of public literature distribution (with utility bills, at garden centers, at public events, etc.) was developed and implemented successfully.

A3. INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM (3 POINTS)

An interpretive program such as a walking tour of outstanding trees for community planting, an arboretum, a heritage tree program (largest, historic, etc.), or similar project was first made available to the public or was significantly improved.

A4. LOCAL AWARDS PROGRAM (3 POINTS)

A recognition program with awards to citizens, commercial enterprises, neighborhood associations, and other citizen groups for such things as best landscaping, tree planting/care projects, etc., was initiated or significantly improved.

A5. COMMUNITYWIDE TREE EVENT (4 POINTS)

A special, communitywide tree event such as an Arborfest, Dogwood Festival, Oak Festival, etc., was initiated or significantly improved. (An Arbor Day celebration is a standard requirement to qualify for Tree City USA. Therefore, only a communitywide, highly publicized Arbor Day celebration or festival in addition to Arbor Day is applicable.) Tree-related activities and/or exhibits must be part of the event.

A6. PUBLICITY (5 POINTS)

An ongoing publicity campaign for tree care and community forestry was initiated or significantly improved — for example, a weekly newspaper

column by the city forester or tree board or a communitywide newsletter about trees.

A7. YOUTH EDUCATION (4 POINTS)

The city initiated or significantly improved a formal, communitywide tree education program for youth (such as the creation of a Nature Explore® Classroom, “Project Learning Tree,” etc.)

A8. CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR TREE WORKERS (6 POINTS)

A training/continuing education program for the city’s tree workers, both employees and contractors, was initiated or significantly improved. The training must be provided at least annually — either by the city or by other qualified organizations.

A9. TREE WORKER SAFETY PROGRAM (5 POINTS)

A comprehensive safety program for city tree workers was initiated or significantly improved that goes beyond formal training to include such methods as daily warmup exercises, wellness programs, safety newsletter, etc.

A10. CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR FORESTRY MANAGERS AND TREE BOARD MEMBERS (6 POINTS)

A continuing education program for forestry managers and tree board members was initiated or significantly improved. Examples include participation in tree-related workshops, conferences, online or correspondence courses, or other structured educational programs for those involved with managing community forests.

A11. TREE CARE WORKSHOPS (4 POINTS)

A workshop on some aspect of tree care was provided for the first time for homeowners, businesses, and other members of the public, ongoing workshops were significantly improved, or public participation was significantly increased.

A12. ARBORIST WORKSHOPS (5 POINTS)

Tree care workshops were provided for the first time for private commercial arborists, ongoing workshops were significantly improved, or participation was significantly increased.

A13. PUBLICITY EVENT (3 POINTS)

An activity specifically designed to gain publicity for the community forestry program was initiated or significantly improved.

Requirements for the Growth Award (continued)

CATEGORY B: *Partnerships*

In these times of limited budgets, working smarter is important for the management of all community resources. When it comes to trees, there are many opportunities to form partnerships that save money, pool knowledge and skills, and add synergy to any project. Here are some suggestions, but as in all categories, other activities not listed may also qualify.

B1. NEW PROJECT OR ORGANIZATION (4 POINTS)

A new, significant tree project was accomplished by the city in partnership with a civic organization, youth group, or other corporate or volunteer entity; or assistance was given in creating a new volunteer organization that contributes to the community forestry program.

B2. UTILITY PARTNERSHIP (5 POINTS)

A cooperative program between the city and a utility was initiated or significantly improved, resulting in additional tree planting, planting appropriate species, improved pruning and other tree care, or utility designation as a Tree Line USA®.

B3. GREEN INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP (5 POINTS)

A cooperative project between the city and businesses such as private nurseries or tree services resulting in improved planting stock, better tree care, improved landscaping methods, the recycling of wood materials, etc., was initiated or significantly improved.

B4. COOPERATIVE CONTRACTING/PLANNING (6 POINTS)

A program was initiated or significantly improved for the community to cooperatively work with another community. (For example, to share a forester; to jointly contract for tree care or computer or other professional services; to purchase expensive equipment such as a tree spade; to pool tree orders; or to jointly implement regional land-use planning.)

B5. EXTERNAL FUNDING (6 POINTS)

The city applied for and received significant, nongovernmental funding (corporations, foundations, civic organizations, individual contributions, etc.) for community forestry.

B6. TREE PLANTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY (4 POINTS)

The city initiated or significantly improved a cost-sharing or other incentive program, or an unusual publicity campaign, etc., to bring about more tree planting on private property. There should be attention given to planting the right tree in the right place and encouraging long-term care.

B7. ENGINEERING/FORESTRY COORDINATION (6 POINTS)

Formalized coordination with city engineering was initiated or significantly improved to ensure proper urban forestry review of street and utility plans, sidewalk construction, and similar practices that impact the health of the city's trees.

B8. LAND-USE PLANNING COORDINATION (5 POINTS)

Procedures for including tree professionals in land-use planning decisions were put into place or significantly improved. Examples might include the appointment of a planning and zoning official to the tree board or vice versa, or routing all development site plans and applications through the city forester for input and approval.

B9. WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION COORDINATION (5 POINTS)

The community has initiated or significantly improved a wildland fire prevention program such as involvement with Firewise USA™. Go to firewise.org/usa for details.

B10. CITIZEN TRAINING PROGRAM (6 POINTS)

A program to train and schedule citizen volunteers to provide basic maintenance suited to volunteers was initiated or significantly improved.



Category B encourages citizens and professionals to form partnerships and work together to save money and enhance communication.

CATEGORY C: *Planning and Management*

Careful planning and good management are at the heart of a systematic, continuous community forestry program. Included below are some activities that go beyond trees and tree care per se and include other parts of the urban ecosystem.

C1. TREE MAINTENANCE BUDGET (9 POINTS)

A budget line in the city budget specifically for tree maintenance (as opposed to planting or removals) was initiated or significantly increased.

C2. MUNICIPAL FUNDING (8 POINTS)

Expanded or innovative municipal funding was developed to be used specifically to increase the planting and care of community trees. Examples include special tax districts, curb tax, bond issues, license fees, gas tax, utility surcharge, etc.

C3. SIDEWALK/CURB POLICY (5 POINTS)

Policies were adopted or significantly improved that call for placement, construction, and replacement and repair of sidewalks and curbs in a manner that will minimize tree damage.

C4. TREE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (7 POINTS)

A basic inventory of street and/or park trees was conducted for the first time or updated, and an analysis was performed indicating what conclusions are to be drawn from the inventory: species mix, planting and care needs, etc.

C5. COMPUTERIZED TREE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (9 POINTS)

The tree management system was computerized and is site specific for the first time, i.e., individual trees are identified with specific locations. The system includes a work-reporting method with the work data on individual trees updated on a regular basis, preferably at least weekly.

C6. MANAGEMENT PLAN (7 POINTS)

For the first time, a long-range, communitywide tree planting and management master plan using inventory data and covering at least the next three- to five-year period was adopted or significantly improved.

C7. LICENSING (5 POINTS)

A licensing program was initiated or significantly improved for all tree care companies or individuals operating in the community.

C8. IMPROVED ORDINANCE (6 POINTS)

A new or revised and significantly improved ordinance related to trees was adopted. The ordinance(s) must lead to the improved management and/or protection of trees and tree habitat and might include such measures as protecting historic or specimen trees, protecting trees and tree habitat during construction, conserving woodlands, ending tree topping, requiring new developments to preserve green spaces or plant trees, requiring parking lot landscaping, etc.

C9. STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS (6 POINTS)

A standards and specifications document was adopted, or updated and significantly improved, as a separate document that complements the community's tree ordinance. Provisions might include such things as acceptable street trees to plant, standards for planting in downtown areas and along residential streets, and tree maintenance guidelines.

C10. WILDLIFE HABITAT (3 POINTS)

Wildlife habitat was developed or protected, including such practices as setting aside "no mowing" zones, planting trees and shrubs for wildlife purposes, protecting riparian zones, providing nest boxes, etc.

C11. PARK, OPEN SPACE (5 POINTS)

Forested open space was acquired or a park developed with major tree planting. To use this criterion, it is necessary to demonstrate that the forestry staff or tree board was instrumental in the project. The land in question must be available for public use. Land covered by a scenic or other easement may also be included here.

C12. EMERGENCY PLAN (4 POINTS)

A tree care emergency plan was developed or significantly improved. The plan could outline who will provide what services after a severe storm, mutual aid available between communities or jurisdictions, and how to work effectively with media.

C13. PROFESSIONAL TREE MANAGER (10 POINTS)

A full-time city forester or equivalent was hired for the first time.

C14. ACCREDITATION FOR FORESTRY DEPARTMENT (10 POINTS)

Seek and receive accreditation for the municipal forestry department such as that provided by the Society of Municipal Arborists (urban-forestry.com).

Requirements for the Growth Award (continued)

CATEGORY D: *Tree Planting and Maintenance*

This category reflects some of the traditional practices commonly associated with Tree City USA activities. While routine projects would not qualify for Growth Award points, new activities or new approaches to old ones not only count, they can add variety and new energy to the community forestry program.

D1. SPECIAL TREE PLANTING PROJECT (4 POINTS)

A tree planting project for a special purpose such as energy conservation, or requiring special circumstances such as pit construction or vandalism protection, was successfully implemented. Such a project would require a special appropriation or special cooperation with the neighborhood or business district.

D2. PUBLIC UTILITY TREE CARE (5 POINTS)

The maintenance of publicly owned utility lines was significantly improved to reduce adverse impacts on trees. An example would be training in the use of state-of-the-art techniques that avoid topping trees or qualifying as a Tree Line USA utility.

D3. RECYCLING (6 POINTS)

A biomass recycling program was successfully implemented or significantly improved. This may include street tree leaves, lawn wastes, tree removals, Christmas trees, etc.

D4. STREET TREE PLANTING (7 POINTS)

The city formally established or significantly improved its street tree planting program.

D5. STREET TREE PRUNING (8 POINTS)

A formal pruning system was established or improved for the city's street trees. This criterion requires significant improvement through the initiation of regularly scheduled visits to all street trees depending on the requirements of the species or the reduction of time between visits if needed.

D6. HAZARD TREE PROGRAM (5 POINTS)

A hazard tree assessment and action program was established or significantly improved, including employee training and a systematic method that includes periodic tree inspections and prompt follow-up when needed.



Involving residents adds to the sense of ownership of community tree resources and contributes to planting and care.

D7. SPECIAL PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE DESTRUCTIVE PRACTICES (6 POINTS)

A program such as an educational or ordinance enforcement campaign to eliminate tree topping communitywide or a training program that eliminates tree damage caused by employees misusing herbicides, weed cutters, and lawnmowers was successfully implemented.

D8. INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (5 POINTS)

Systems and methods for insect and disease control that are environmentally sensitive were put into place or significantly improved.

D9. PLANS FOR DONATIONS (3 POINTS)

Plans were developed or significantly improved for projects such as vest-pocket parks, arboretum improvements, memorial tree groves, woodland acquisitions, etc., to be available in case of unexpected cash donations or similar opportunities.

D10. CONTRACT GROWING (5 POINTS)

A contract with a nursery was initiated or significantly improved to provide specific varieties or species of street and park trees for future years (to enable planning and to ensure the right trees for the right sites).

D11. TREE PRESERVATION (6 POINTS)

A special project or program was initiated to preserve or relocate trees on development or construction sites.

The Growth Award and Community Forestry

The success of Tree City USA is attributed to at least four factors: (1) The unique partnership that combines the resources and abilities of the federal government, state foresters, local foresters, citizen leaders, and a nonprofit foundation — focusing them on a common goal of improved community forestry; (2) equal participation for communities of any size; (3) a growing appreciation of how trees contribute to the environmental quality and economic vitality of our communities, and (4) the realization that a systematic, well-planned tree care program is a wise investment.

The Growth Award builds on all these features and offers an opportunity to show what can be done. This, of course, is essential in selling others on the development of an improved program. What is also necessary to gain broad support is to show how a particular practice will benefit the community.

Examples abound of the link between proactive management and community benefits: a new piece of literature enlightens homeowners who then plant low-growing trees near power lines or trees less prone to ice storm damage; a street tree inventory leads to a systematic planting program that fills open spaces and helps cool the summer air; an arborist workshop teaches a skill that prevents a serious accident — and the list goes on.

One of the most quantified examples of the link to benefits is shown below. The table was developed for the City of Rockford, Illinois, by the urban forestry consulting firm of ACRT, Inc. It clearly illustrates in dollars and good sense how a change in just one or two practices results in added benefits and proves to be an excellent investment of public funds.



EFFECTS OF STREET TREE SERVICE LEVELS ON TREE VALUES AND BENEFITS

| SERVICE LEVEL | CURRENT VALUE | SERVICE LEVEL for next five years | Cost of MAINTENANCE for next five years | Changes in TREE POPULATION | FUTURE WORTH in five years | RETURN: FUTURE WORTH Less Maint. Costs and Current Value | OTHER COMMENTS |
|---------------|---------------|--|---|---|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| None | \$44,229,800 | None | None | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% mortality • 20% decline in condition rating • 3% diam. increase | \$29,801,800 | – \$14,428,000 | Maximum liability, impractical |
| Current | \$44,229,800 | Requested work only | \$1,008,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.6% mortality • 10% decline in condition rating • 3% diam. increase | \$37,040,900 | – \$ 8,196,900 | Liability risk: High |
| Minimal | \$44,229,800 | 10-year cycle, removals and safety trims as needed | \$2,318,400 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.6% mortality • No change in condition rating • 4% diam. increase | \$49,447,000 | \$ 2,898,800 | Liability risk: Low |
| Optimal | \$44,229,800 | 5-year cycle, plantings, removals, and safety trims as recommended | \$3,733,900 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120% of removed trees replaced • 10% increase in condition rating • 5% diam. increase • 5% species rating increase | \$70,732,700 | \$22,769,000 | Liability risk: Lowest |

Growth Opportunity

Each year, the Arbor Day Foundation hosts the Partners in Community Forestry Conference. This unique, annual event now serves as a strategic gathering of leaders across urban forestry's many diverse groups who seek to promote best practices in urban forest management. The Partners Conference connects the many groups that impact and support community trees by:

- Promoting sustainable partnership models.
- Connecting many organizations that impact the health of our community trees.
- Encouraging innovation in programs and projects through traditional and non-traditional groups.

For current information, please visit arborday.org/pcf.



Growth Award

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To download a Growth Award application and learn more details about requirements, please visit arborday.org/treecityUSA.

Other helpful information may be found at arborday.org/bulletins. The site is also a helpful source of publications, visual aids, and items to help you promote Tree City USA in your community.

Tree City USA Bulletin ORDER FORM

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For a complete list of Tree City USA Bulletins and bulk pricing/quantities, visit arborday.org/bulletins.

| | \$ | 1 Issue \$3.00 ea. |
|--|----------|-----------------------|
| 1. How to Prune Young Shade Trees | 1. | |
| 2. When a Storm Strikes | 2. | |
| 3. Resolving Tree/Sidewalk Conflicts | 3. | |
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THE TREE CITY USA PROGRAM IS SPONSORED BY THE Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. To achieve the national recognition of being named as a Tree City USA, a town or city must meet four standards:

- Standard 1: A tree board or department
- Standard 2: A tree care ordinance
- Standard 3: A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
- Standard 4: An Arbor Day observance and proclamation

Each recognized community receives a Tree City USA flag, plaque, and community entrance signs. Towns and cities of every size can qualify. Tree City USA application forms are available from your state forester, the Arbor Day Foundation at arborday.org/treecity, or your state forestry agency.